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ABSTRACT

At the turn of the 20th century, Crete was ‘suspended between East and West’ in more ways than one. In the aftermath of numerous insurrections, intense ethno-communal strife, and a great deal of human and material destruction, the island passed from direct Ottoman rule to a regime of ‘semi-independence’. However, overt Great Power tutelage, a conservative constitution ‘with defects of infancy’, a weak and depleted economy, and an incessant predilection for the politics of enosis did little to enhance the island’s path to progress. Undoubtedly, the particular historical juncture that brought about the hybrid Cretan state and Prince George’s ‘unfortunate regime’ was instrumental in turning the island into an archaeological ‘El Dorado’, with the British at the helm. But the political contingency aside, ‘personal factors’, I argue, were of equal importance. In particular, the rapport that Chatzidakes and Xanthoudides had established with Evans facilitated the convergence of national (Cretan) archaeology as a means of incorporating the island into European modernity with colonial archaeology, which in turn has left its weighty imprint especially on the appropriation of the ‘Minoan’ past.

INTRODUCTION

In 1891 the director of the École Française d’Athènes, Théophile Homolle, maintained that Ottoman Crete had ‘the most astonishing ruins, the most crucial discoveries for archaeology’, arguing that ‘it is essential to gain a foothold there, particularly in the region of Knossos, before the Germans move in’ (cited in Farnoux 1996: 32). Coming in the wake of the death of Heinrich Schliemann, whose desire to excavate at Knossos was no secret, and the unsuccessful attempts of many scholars, archaeologists, and consuls (e.g. the American William J. Stillman, the Italian Federico Halbherr, and the Frenchman André Joubin) to acquire property rights over the Kephala site, Homolle’s assertion acquires an added urgency.

One of the main stumbling blocks to all such endeavours was highlighted, somewhat bluntly perhaps, by the former British consul at Chania. Responding to a request by a young member of the British School at Athens, John Linton Myres, as to how best one
should pursue his search for prehistoric sites on the island, in late 1892 Thomas Backhouse Sandwith noted that the greatest obstacle to the explorer of antiquities lies in the patriotic jealousy with which certain educated Greeks in the chief towns regard the foreigner. There exists an inchoate Museum in Candia, to which these Cretan gentlemen are anxious that all objects of archaeological interest should find their way; but in as much as the Turkish authorities would prefer to send such to Constantinople, the former discourage the search after antiquities till such time as the island should pass under Greek rule. (Cited in Brown 1986: 38)

Fourteen years later, and with no Ottoman troops and officials in sight, the island was to resemble a huge excavation site, an ‘archaeological El Dorado’ in the making (Farnoux 1996: 27).

REGIME CHANGE AND THE POLITICS OF ENOSIS

At the turn of the 20th century, Crete was ‘suspended between East and West’ (McEnroe 2002: 63) in more ways than one. In the aftermath of numerous insurrections, intense ethno-communal strife, and a great deal of human and material destruction, by 16 November 1898 the last Ottoman troops and civilian authorities had left. This development, hardly warranted on the grounds of Greek prowess on either the island or the mainland, came principally as a result of Great Power intervention, which in turn was grounded in the Porte’s wholesale defeat in the diplomatic field and the Concert of Europe’s desire to bring to a makeshift end the deplorable situation of an island ‘governed by no one’ (Turkey 1898/5: 201, Consul-General Sir A. Biliotti to the Marquess of Salisbury, Chania, 16 June 1898; cf. Holland 1999: 255) – so unmistakably demonstrated with the massacre of some 500 Greek Christians and two dozen British soldiers in Herakleion by unruly Muslim militia and civilians in early September 1898 (Karelles 2001 and Holland and Markides 2006: 101-2). With the withdrawal completed, jubilant crowds attended the Te Deums held in all the Greek Orthodox churches, whilst the Turkish flag had been ‘lowered everywhere except on the Government house in Canea’ (Turkey 1899/1: 43, Biliotti to the Marquess of Salisbury, Herakleion, 16 November 1898) – henceforth a nominal reminder of Sultan Abdulhamit II’s suzerainty over a piece of territory whose Christian and Muslim inhabitants had been under his predecessors’ sway for a bit over two centuries.

The island’s passage from direct Ottoman rule, which in any case had been gradually undermined since the introduction of a series of administrative reforms in the late 1860s, to a regime of ‘semi-independence’ (Street 1903; cf. Sbolopoulos 1988: 461) was confirmed two weeks later. On 1 December the Great Powers (Britain, France, Italy, and Russia) formally informed the Porte that, desirous of ‘facilitating the work of pacification’, they had appointed a Christian High Commissioner to govern the island. Acting in their self-proclaimed capacity as guarantors and protectors of this ‘new autonomous organization’, they had chosen the King of Greece’s second son, who had already agreed to abide by a series of conditions set by them – including the recognition of the Sultan’s high suzerainty over the island. Crucially, whereas to the Porte the High Commissioner was designated as the powers’ ‘Delegate’, in the case of Athens he was ‘invested’ with ‘the mandate of assuring order and security’ for a period of three years at the first instance – subsequently renewed for two more three-year terms, the second of which was cut short in September 1906 following his resignation (Turkey 1899/1: 41, Sir E. Egerton to the Marquess of Salisbury, Athens 23 November 1898; Turkey 1899/1: 55-6, Egerton to the Marquess of Salisbury, 26 November 1898; Turkey 1899/1: 57, Ambassador Sir N. O’Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury, Constantinople, 1 December 1898).
The difference is not solely semantic; rather, it unmistakably points to what Robert Holland (1999: 254) has referred to as a 'half-way house solution', buttressed by the presence in the island of the protecting powers' officers and troops for much of the new century's first decade. Either way, on 21 December Prince George landed at Suda Bay from where he fittingly drove to that same government house which hoisted the Turkish flag. In the elation of the moment, particularly felt by those of Greek Orthodox extraction (the Muslim element confining itself to a 'most becoming demeanour': Turkey 1899/1: 87, Biliotti to the Marquess of Salisbury, Chania, 21 December 1898), a new era seemed to be dawning – the formidable legacies of the Ottoman past notwithstanding. Predictably, in his inaugural proclamation to the Cretan people, the Prince himself rejoiced in his confidence 'that with your great patriotism you will soon show the world a happy Crete, following the path of progress that will secure the favour of the Great Powers' (cited in GEORGE 1959: 21).

The hybrid nature, both in form and content, of the island's new regime was thrown into high relief almost simultaneously upon its inception. One of the conditions imposed upon the High Commissioner was to 'institute a system of autonomous government' that, 'in concert with the National Assembly, in which all elements shall be represented', should strive to secure the 'safety of persons and property as well as absolute religious liberty' – a key demand of the Porte in consenting to the withdrawal of its troops. Such a would-be 'enlightened' government was grounded in a constitution that eventually came into force in late April 1899, and has invariably been called 'an extremely conservative document', one 'with defects of infancy', and 'a grave and inexcusable error' (cited in MACRAKIS, in press). Unsurprisingly, the weighty imprint of Great Power influence on this legally binding document is impossible to miss, and plainly demonstrated in Article 1, which reads thus: 'The Island of Crete, with the adjacent islets, constitutes a State (Politeia), enjoying complete autonomy, under the conditions established by the four Great Powers' (Turkey 1901/1: 68, Biliotti to the Marquess of Salisbury, Chania, 21 December 1898, enclosing final text; emphasis added; Greek text in Syntagma 1899).

As 'Head of the State', Prince George was invested with extensive powers, executive as well as legislative and judicial. At the same time, such scope for participation in the process of law making as was accorded to the chamber of representatives was cancelled out by the provision that 'legally the Prince is neither responsible nor subject to any restraint' (Article 29) – save those imposed by the protecting powers, naturally. Thus the Greek High Commissioner was at once both the 'Delegate' of the Great Powers over a stretch of territory under nominal Ottoman suzerainty and the representative of the Cretans, Christians and Muslims alike, with whom he had entered into a 'contract' over which the latter had no control; nor did they enjoy any powers of effectively scrutinizing the Prince’s actions (cf. SBOLOPOULOS 1988: 461). This double-proxy position of his, in conjunction with his idiosyncratic character and autocratic manners, brought him into conflict with both elements of the equation that he was constitutionally bound to represent – and in the case of the Cretans, one may add, to serve. That he lasted as High Commissioner for as long as he did was no mean feat, though it probably owed more to his adversaries' reluctance to get rid of him earlier (and their diametrically opposed interests) than to Prince George's statesman-like qualities.

Given the highly nationalistic character of the Greek Orthodox element's struggle for union with the 'motherland' for much of the 19th century, Athens's constant support – overt or concealed – for the cause, as well as the makeshift nature of the 1898 settlement, it was perhaps inevitable that the Prince's High Commissionership would be dominated by the politics of enosis. That much is patently evident in the profoundly self-referential,
vindictive and apologetic alike, memoirs of the Prince (George 1959), his memoranda to the protecting powers (George 1955), and in most scholarly accounts on the subject (e.g. the works of Holland and Sbolooulos). Even if the Prince's confidence in the Cretans' 'great patriotism' could be construed as non-national-specific, his determination to bring about the island's union with Greece was apparent from the outset, in both his words and his deeds. Yet, his canvassing of European capitals in autumn 1900 and again four years later to 'implore the Great Powers no longer to delay the union of the Island with the mother-country' (George 1959: 167) came to nothing; likewise his July 1904 proposal that, as far as its international status was concerned, the Cretan State should be modelled after the regime currently in place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Ottoman suzerainty had been bypassed by the establishment of a de facto Austro-Hungarian administration – though hardly one of the 'enlightened' type, it should be added (George 1959: 146-8; Holland 2001: 35). Determined to do nothing that would undermine the fragile status quo and most probably unravel a barrage of compensatory territorial demands or changes elsewhere in south-eastern Europe, the protecting powers held their ground. They refused seriously to consider the Prince's predicament, only partly one of his own making, countenancing nevertheless his overtures, for, as the Foreign Office had instructed their consul in Chania, the idea was to 'let him down gently' (cited in George 1959: xvii; cf. Holland 1999 and 2001: passim).

If, early on, the powers' inflexibility had turned the Prince into a lame duck, it was his domestic adversaries' double-edged opposition to two of the main guiding principles of his High Commissionership that in the event forced the issue. Led by Eleutherios Venizelos, the seasoned native politician and, until his dismissal in spring 1901, Councillor for Justice, they challenged not only the Prince's forlorn quest for immediate enosis but also his authoritarianism and centralism in the exercise of his high office. The versatile Venizelos might have played a key role in the drafting of the 1899 constitution, which, in his own words, was responsible for the Prince's 'autocratic behaviour' (cited in Macrakis, in press), but was not averse to putting aside enosis for the time being, cognizant of the fact that the constraints imposed by the powers' realpolitik were too rigid to be overcome. Instead, he held that all efforts should be concentrated on turning the Cretan State into a truly autonomous one, a development that would in the short term sever the powers' overt tutelage of the island. Such an eventuality hinged on the Prince's willingness to share with the chamber of representatives the vast executive and legislative powers he enjoyed and, crucially, to become accountable to the latter. With none of these two preconditions in the offing, Venizelos and his followers embarked on a direct course of collision with the Prince, staging the so-called Therissos insurrection in 1905 (Sbolooulos 1988: 467-77; 2005: 165-271). In the Cretan rebel's own words, which, incidentally, he would also put into practice later on in his 'disagreement' with the Prince's elder brother King Constantine I, 'when authority takes the people's liberties away by force, this opens the path to legitimate revolution and once this path is taken the victor will always be the people' (cited in Macrakis, in press). In doing so, they undoubtedly managed to force the Prince's resignation a year later, but also contributed to further blemishing his 'unfortunate regime' (Holland 2001: 45).

Admittedly the breakdown in relations between the High Commissioner and his native adversaries was conditioned by the new regime's hybrid nature as well as the obstinacy of the Prince and Venizelos alike. But it was also endemic to a wider trait of Greek politics at the time, both on the island and on the mainland: namely, the hazy delimitation of the powers of the executive/head of state, and the legislative, be it the chamber of representatives or the Boule, particularly over foreign policy matters. In his memoirs (1959: 24),
Prince George discounts this ‘anomaly’, and simply refers to the ‘detestable, demoralizing, and destructive influence of party politics (that made) a just administration impossible’. Irrespective of whether his disgust with ‘Greek politics’ was justified, there is no doubt that it hindered from the outset any chance of profitable collaboration with Venizelos, particularly as it soon transpired that the two men disagreed on the fundamentals of the politics of enosis and how best to realize the cause: immediate enosis for the sake of enosis, arguably with no perceptible chances of success, versus the shaking off of international tutelage through the strengthening of autonomy with a view to declaring union with Greece at a more propitious opportunity – as was eventually to happen six years after the departure of the hapless Prince.

THE MUSLIM EXODUS AND THE CONVOLUTED PATHS TO PROGRESS

The devastation on both sides has been bitter and universal. In pecuniary damage the Christians are the greatest sufferers, since the stores and other property pillaged by the Turks in the towns is of greater value than the Mahometan villages destroyed in the country districts. […] But, on the other hand, the Mahometan peasants have lost their little all. The villages are mere heaps of ruins. The roofs have been torn away for fire-wood and the rubble walls battered in; the mosques have been blown to pieces; the olives and vines have been cut; the whole country-side where Mahometan villagers once lived is a scene of desolation; the paths are almost impassable on account of the scattered debris of ruined walls and the torn limbs of fruit-bearing trees; dead animals have been thrown into the cisterns; the minarets in some cases have afforded crematories for the dead. The survivors are now […] mostly refugees in Candia. How shall they ever return? Once more – it is the Nemesis of Armenia! (EVANS 1898: 22-3)

This passage from Arthur Evans’s polemical impressions of Crete in the wake of the 1898 regime change is unmistakably sensationalist. But it does portray a society riven by ethnic conflict and, crucially, one in which coexistence does not seem to be on the cards. Sir Alfred Biliotti’s contemporary reports were even more alarming in that, as a seasoned consular official, he was interested not solely in reporting on the present ‘state of destitution’ but also in proffering covert suggestions as to what should be done to avert the materialization of a doomsday scenario:

As the condition of the Moslems is getting worse from day to day, so is also that of Christians, and if no remedy is found before the coming winter, the whole population of Crete may be so completely ruined that the sums required to assist them in their distress may be beyond the means of which the island is able to dispose. The present is no longer a political question, but has become one of humanity. (Turkey 1898/5: 202, Biliotti to the Marquess of Salisbury, Chania, 16 June 1898)

With hindsight, the sensationalism of such first-hand accounts served its purpose well, inasmuch as the powers took the necessary steps to ensure that a situation whereby the island was ‘governed by no one’ would not be prolonged further – though one wonders whether the extent of regime change would have been as far-reaching as it was, had it not been for the Herakleion massacres (Cf. HOLLAND and MARKIDES 2006: 103-7). Although regime change had been agreed prior to these events, the latter were instrumental in expediting the whole process and, crucially, in ‘imposing’ upon the Sultan the complete withdrawal of Ottoman troops (regular as well as irregular). Indicative is a leader in the
Athenian daily *Ebro* (6/19 June 1900: 1), which opined that ‘with the massacre in Herakleion, the Turks buried the last misgivings of the Powers and expedited the solution of the Cretan Question’. Identical views, though from a far less pro-Greek angle, were expressed early on by the correspondent of *The Times* (8 September 1898: 4) in Chania.

Either way, the autumn 1898 settlement by which Crete became ‘governable’ had a negative effect on the island’s Muslim element. Notwithstanding his views on the ‘existence of inferior races’ that he wished to see ‘exterminated’ (cited in MacGillivray 2001: 50), Evans was particularly perceptive when preceding his question as to whether the displaced Muslims will ever return to their homes with the adverb ‘how’ in his letter to the *Manchester Guardian*; while from the outset of his dig he would ‘employ both Mahometan and Christian workmen, so that the work of Knossos might be an earnest of the future co-operation of the two creeds under the new régime in the island’ (Evans 1899-1900: 67). In reality, however, no matter how strong and sincere the assurances of Prince George and his councillors regarding religious tolerance and equality before the law (Articles 7, 10-11 of the constitution), they were not enough to stop scores of Muslims from leaving (see Table 1 and Peponakes 2001). Even those who had stayed on, as Biliotti’s successor maintained, ‘will emigrate in large numbers when the international troops are withdrawn’ (Turkey 1901/1: 181, Consul-General R.W. Graves to the Marquess of Salisbury, Chania, 25 August 1900, with enclosures on official population figures). Suffice it to note that the implacable animosity that each side held for the other, so cruelly exposed by both elements in the late 1890s, was congruent with contemporary images of the Ottoman Turks as ‘usurpers of Greek lands and temporary squatters’, as ‘inapt to any intellectual development’, as synonymous with ‘barbarism’ in school textbooks and academic and literary works published in Greece proper (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002: 260; Kououri 1988: 539; Repoussé 2005: 93, n. 85; Mellas 2001: 301-4, 327-49).

Contrary to most instances of mass departure, relatively speaking the Muslim exodus was not carried out in a haphazard manner. Scores of those who ‘chose’ to leave were, eventually, afforded assistance in doing so in an orderly fashion. They were principally landholders and owners of small workshops, selling their plots of land and premises for cash and taking to greener pastures what movable property they could, including implements, livestock, and machinery. The transfer of land to the Christian majority, a process that had begun in the era of the Tanzimat, led to a significant shortfall in capital investment in the early days of the new regime, compounded by the policy of the former Ottoman authorities of demanding payment of agricultural taxes in cash rather than as a percentage of output, as was the norm. The crisis in agriculture, the only economic sector of any noteworthiness, was further facilitated by the scorched-earth practice of the last round of ethnic conflict that both Christians and Muslims had systematically carried out. Warehouses,
barns, livestock, and implements belonging to Muslims were set on fire and/or pillaged, resulting in the paying out of more than 100 million drachmas in compensation by the Cretan State. Particularly detrimental in the short term, as well indicative of the prevailing animosity, was the destruction of as many as 1.5 million olive, orange, citrus, and vine trees (more than 12% of the total; see a photograph of ‘blackened stumps and pits’ in Hogarth 1910: 64). Unsurprisingly, throughout the 1900s the island experienced both a trade deficit, compounded by the fact that imports still fell under the capitulations system, as Crete was nominally under Ottoman suzerainty, and a budget deficit, as revenues from taxes and tariffs were meagre by comparison to public expenditure. Sustaining financially the running of the autonomous regime meant resorting to external borrowing, which in turn further hindered Prince George’s call to the Cretans (in effect the Christian element alone) to follow the ‘path of progress’ in his inaugural address. And, naturally, the focus on the politics of enosis and the schism that arose thereby were hardly conducive to the island’s internal development (and here, again, one can draw a parallel with an endemic feature of politics in Greece proper).1

TOWARDS ATTAINING THE ‘PROMISED LAND’ OF AEGEAN RESEARCH

There were, of course, other ‘paths to progress’; though whether these would have ‘secure[d] the favour of the Great Powers’, at least as Prince George envisaged, is another story. Others have already discussed the ‘politics of archaeology’ as practised at the turn of the century and thereafter, and the diachronic interplay between archaeology and colonialism (see e.g. Gosden 2004; specifically on the ‘Cretan case’, see McEnroe 2002; Momigliano 2002: 269-70). Notwithstanding the merits of the particular historical juncture, here I propose to point out those Cretan ‘personal factors’ that facilitated the turning of the island into an ‘archaeological El Dorado’ with the British at the helm, bringing to fruition its ascription as the ‘promised land’ of Aegean research (Hogarth and Bosanquet 1899: 321).

Sandwith’s 1892 riposte, cited in the introduction, might contain an element of exaggeration, for ‘patriotic jealousy’ was not the sole ‘obstacle’. Other impediments were the deplorable state of local affairs in the 1880s and 1890s; the frequent change of Ottoman governors, some favouring excavations, others not too amenable to such activities; and the lack of funds. Overall, there is little doubt that the island’s status as a troubled province of the Ottoman Empire was hardly conducive to the ‘search after antiquities’. Conversely, the autumn 1898 settlement and the omnipresence of the ‘protecting’ powers thereafter negated most of these obstacles. As Evans and the Director of the British School at Athens, David George Hogarth, put it in a letter to The Times (12 June 1899: 13): ‘The new conditions in which Crete is placed and the final emancipation of the island from Turkish rule have at last rendered it possible to organize a serious effort to recover the evidences of her early civilization’.

Yet, Sandwith was spot on in regarding those ‘Cretan gentlemen’ as patriotic guardians of the island’s ‘archaeological objects’. That much is verified by numerous other contempo-

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1 To the best of my knowledge, the economy and society of the Cretan State have not yet been thoroughly examined, despite the wide array of accessible sources. This brief general account draws on SIKOPOULOS 1988: 462–3, MARGARITIS 2001, and PERAKES 2001.
raneous observers and travellers, who, perhaps, were more willing than the former consul to acknowledge the island's 'Hellenic' past, present and future. Upon visiting that 'inchoate Museum' in Herakleion in 1893, the Italian geologist Vittorio Simonelli asked its curator whether its holdings were increasing: 'Slowly,' he replied, 'for the (Christian) Cretans are afraid that they are working... for the museum in Constantinople. Let's wait for a while, they say, since, one way or another, nothing can preserve better the ancient objects than the earth that has conserved them for centuries' (Simonelli 1996: 178). Later in the year, Simonelli's interlocutor advised the young Myres against applying for a permit from Constantinople to excavate at Knossos: 'because, apart from the fact that it would be granted only with great difficulty, it could be used only with greater difficulty, because the Turkish government would take any finds. But this would upset us greatly, and we would try by all means to prevent it' (cited in Brown 1986: 43). Laying claim to ownership by right was the guiding principle of those 'Cretan gentlemen'.

The director, whom Simonelli describes as the museum's 'soul', was none other than Iosef Chatzidakes – a gentleman indeed, though strictly speaking not a native of Crete. Born of Cretan parents on the island of Melos, after studying at the universities of Athens, Munich, Berlin, and Paris, he moved to Syros where he practised medicine before, finally, settling in Herakleion in 1882 at the age of 34. A year later he was unanimously elected president of the town's Society for the Promotion of Education (Philekpaideutikos Syllagos, established 1875). On his suggestion, that 'noble institution, which represented the movement of the country toward intellectual and moral progress' (Halbherr 1896: 527; cf. La Rosa 2000: 15, n. 42), switched its attention to safeguarding and collecting the island's 'ancient remains' (Chatzidakes 1931: 9; Detorakes 1986, 2003; La Rosa 2000: 91-2) – just, it should be added, as a new Ottoman antiquities law, characterized by the Revue Archéologique (1884: 335) as an 'unimaginative' document that reproduced 'the restrictive and prohibitive laws that have been applied in Greece for more than half a century', had placed all finds under state custody (Traill 1995: 284; Marchand 1996: 198; see Table 2). A practical man and also one with a self-invested 'mission' (his 1931 work on the Cretan museum leaves no doubt about that), Chatzidakes lost no time in getting permission from the Ottoman authorities to open the museum, in soliciting (and receiving) moral and financial support from the Archaeological Society in Athens, and in instilling in Christian Cretans a sense of appreciation of – and pride in – antiquities (though how successful this latter endeavour was is difficult to gauge) (Chatzidakes 1931: 10-11; Sakellarakes 1998). Although the recovery and appropriation of the Cretan past was a common desideratum among Greek intellectuals both on the island and on the mainland, Chatzidakes's practical nous occasionally brought tensions with some of his less pragmatic and more ethnocentric colleagues. For example, the philologist Ioannes Perdikares, secretary of the Syllogos in the 1880s, not only claimed for himself the suggestion that the Syllogos become a repository of Cretan antiquities but also poured scorn on Chatzidakes's overtly unprincipled tendency not always to consult either the board's members or the society on matters pertinent to the efforts of 'foreign archaeologists' to undertake excavations on the island; for, as he put it in a letter to the president of the Society in May 1886, 'it is our national duty not to accept lightly the proposals of for-

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2Sandwith had played a key role in the negotiations that led to the Chalepa Pact of 1878, holding the view that an autonomous Crete was a better, and more desirable, option to enosis; IEE 1977: 336-7, 357.

Either way, by the mid-1890s, Chatzidakes had undoubtedly become the first port of call for any foreigners in search of Cretan antiquities. Depending on whether they had accepted the principle of rightful ownership and heeded his advice, they were held in high esteem and scorned in equal measure by the doctor-turned-guardian of the island’s ‘Hellenic’ heritage. Thus, Evans was liberally assisted in acquiring part of the Kephala site in 1894 from its Muslim owners (the purchase of the full site was attained five years later, again with Chatzidakes’s unqualified support), having agreed that the ‘Museum of the Syllagos’ would own any findings, ‘only reserving to us the right of publication and such specimens as were not needed or could be spared’ (cited in Evans 1943: 314, emphasis in the original) – despite the fact that less than a year earlier Evans had publicly ridiculed ‘the theory that the present occupants of Greece or the Ottoman possessors of the Eastern Empire are the sole legitimate heirs even of minor monuments of ancient culture (…) Twere hard indeed that not so much as a plaything should come down to us from the cradle of our civilization!’ (cited in MacGillivray 2001: 115). Conversely, his French colleague André Joubin, who had independently negotiated the purchase of land at the same site and, indeed, had bypassed the ‘Cretan gentlemen’ and sought permission to excavate directly from Constantinople, was left to rue his actions. As Evans recorded in his diary on 22 March 1894, ‘Hadjidakis and all the Greeks here are much averse to Joubin having any finger in the pie now that he has become a Turkish employé and an underling’ of the director of the Constantinople museum (cited in Evans 1943: 314).

With the principal ‘obstacle’ out of the way, in early 1899 Chatzidakes wrote to Evans that no excavations could begin before the legal framework on the ownership and export of finds had been set up (MacGillivray 2001: 163). Together with his like-minded ‘co-patriot’, the philologist and archaeologist Stephanos Xanthoudides (Evans 1943: 327; Detorakes 1990), he embarked on the drafting of an antiquities law, which became operative on 30 June 1899, following its approval by the High Commissioner. It afforded the State sole custody of all Cretan antiquities, banning their exportation, and making their possession by individuals a criminal offence. In his unashamedly patriotic History of the Cretan Museum, Chatzidakes (1931: 22) maintains that it was ‘a near-copy of the one in force in Greece at the time’ – a view upheld in most subsequent works of relevance (Petrakos 1982: 74-5; MacGillivray 2001: 165; Momigliano 2002: 288, n. 88). Norwithstanding that the Greek law came into force after the Cretan one, on 24 July 1899, there is also one (vital?) difference between the two. In the chapter on excavations, Article 10 provides that these can only be undertaken on behalf of the State, as does that of the Greek law, either by its own officers (ditto) or by archaeological institutions of ‘whatever nationality’ working under the supervision of officials of the two archaeological committees (ephories) that were established (Article 23), with none other than Chatzidakes and Xanthoudides as directors. One can safely argue that this ‘divergence’ from the Greek law was due to the indisputable lack of Cretan funds (e.g. the same article does not take it for granted that the ‘government’ will always be in a position to allocate the necessary compensatory funds so that excavations can begin), as well as the island’s peculiar international status as an autonomous political entity under the Sultan’s suzerainty – both factors precluding the Cretan State from concluding agreements with foreign institutions outside the law’s framework, as was the case with the ‘mother country’ (e.g. with the Germans at Olympia and the French at Delphi). And yet Chatzidakes’s brain-child, again specifically the chapter on ‘excavations’, differs also from the 1898 antiquities law of the principality of
Samos, which afforded foreign individuals, not institutions, the right to excavate on behalf of the autonomous state (Table 2).

Here, with no access to Chatzidakes’s papers, if indeed the bulk have survived, one can only speculate when accounting for this ‘omission’. Was he trying to avoid the possibility of another Joubin (or, worse still, the man himself) turning up on his doorstep? Not likely, inasmuch as the final decision on any application rested with the ‘government’ — that is, the High Commissioner. Was it simply a case of oversight on his part? Improbable, inasmuch as the individual whom Chatzidakes had spared no expenses, literally as well as figuratively, to support, though associated with a number of archaeological ‘institutions’ (the Ashmolean Museum, the British School at Athens, the Hellenic Society in London), strictly speaking ‘represented his own interests’ (MACGILLIVRAY 2001: 164) — a point reinforced both by Evans’s correspondence with his father and Hogarth at the time, as well as contemporary newspaper accounts (see EVANS 1943: 329; MOMIGLIANO 1999: 39; The Times, 2 June 1899: 8). And in late summer 1899 it was Evans, not any of the aforementioned ‘institutions’, who became the sole owner of the Kephala site. Unless, of course, Chatzidakes’s intention was to exclude any other individual save Evans.

This seems to me to be the most plausible explanation, particularly as Evans had taken steps to pre-empt Chatzidakes’s brain-child before it became operative — perhaps even on the suggestion of the ‘Cretan gentleman’ himself. Recently described as a man who

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1 For snapshots of his correspondence with the Society in Athens and Federico Halbherr, see SAKELLARAKES 1998 and LA ROSA 2000, respectively.

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### Table 2. Legislation on ownership and excavation of antiquities

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<th>Ottoman law (February 1884)</th>
<th>Samian law (June 1898)</th>
<th>Cretan law (June 1899)</th>
<th>Greek law (July 1899)</th>
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<td>Article 3</td>
<td>All antiquities in the Ottoman Empire belong by law to the State.</td>
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<td>Article 10</td>
<td>Excavation permits are accorded by the Sublime Porte on the recommendation of the Ministry of Education and the directorate of the imperial museum.</td>
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<td>Article 15</td>
<td>Those wishing to undertake excavations should submit a topographical plan of the excavation site. This plan, together with the official application, should be submitted to the Ministry of Education in Constantinople or the Governors General in the provinces. Applications submitted in the provinces will be forwarded to the Ministry of Education.</td>
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<td>Article 22</td>
<td>Excavation permits will not be accorded in the name of Ottoman or foreign public servants for the areas they perform their duties.</td>
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<td>Article 1</td>
<td>All antiquities in Samos (…) are considered state property.</td>
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<td>Article 7</td>
<td>The Samian Administration may allow Samian or foreign archaeologists to undertake excavations.</td>
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<td>Article 8</td>
<td>The Principality’s Administration has the right to oversee and be in charge of the excavations through an expert archaeologist, either a Samian or an omogenis (i.e. of Greek descent).</td>
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<td>Article 10</td>
<td>Only the Government (…) can undertake archaeological excavations and, specifically, on any plot of land, if it has at its disposal from the budget or elsewhere the required funds for the appropriation of the land (in question) and payment of due compensation. It undertakes (excavations) either directly with its own officers and workers, or indirectly via scientific institutions, of whatever nationality, (…) that promote the science of Archaeology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article 1</td>
<td>All antiquities in Crete (…) are the property of the Cretan State.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article 10</td>
<td>Only the Government (…) can undertake archaeological excavations and, specifically, on any plot of land, if it has at its disposal from the budget or elsewhere the required funds for the appropriation of the land (in question) and payment of due compensation. It undertakes (excavations) either directly with its own officers and workers, or indirectly via scientific institutions, of whatever nationality, (…) that promote the science of Archaeology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article 1</td>
<td>All antiquities in Greece (…) are the property of the State.</td>
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<td>Article 13</td>
<td>The Ministry of Education has the right to undertake excavations not only on (public) but on private land as well.</td>
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<td>Article 15</td>
<td>The owner of any plot of land is prohibited from undertaking excavations therein without the written permission of the Ministry of Education.</td>
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‘rarely allowed affairs of state to affect his own affairs’ (MacGillivray 2001: 163), on 22 March 1899 he petitioned Prince George to grant him permission to ‘secure certain sites in Crete for British archaeological exploration’, in particular ‘an ancient mound called Kephala [...] where I wish to dig’, adding that he was acting ‘on behalf of the Hellenic Society and the London Committee of the British School of Athens’. Recording his meeting with the Prince the following day, Evans wrote in his diary: ‘Prince George himself very favourable. Promised all we want’, also noting that the clause of the draft Cretan antiquities law ‘about acquiring sites [was] very favourable to explorers’ (cited in Evans 1943: 327; see also The Times, 1 July 1899: 8). Three weeks later (i.e. a good two months before the antiquities law became operative), the High Commissioner gave him the go-ahead, ‘as soon as you [i.e. Evans] can produce a legal right to the ground’ (cited in MacGillivray 2001: 165); while thereafter he agreed to become patron of the so-called Cretan Exploration Fund (The Times, 2 June 1899: 8; Momigliano 1999: 38; Cadogan 2000: 15), another ‘factor’ providing a veneer of institutional legitimacy to Evans’s undertakings. Significantly, given Evans’s earlier public ridicule of the ‘legitimate heirs’ axiom, to date no record of his dissatisfaction with the Cretan antiquities law has been unearthed, whereas at least one of his colleagues at the time, Halbherr, found its severity quite ‘ridiculous’ (Momigliano 2002: 284-5).

EPILOGUE

In his Accidents of an Antiquary’s Life, Hogarth obliquely explained the preferential treatment accorded to Evans thus: ‘He alone could urge the convincing claim of sacrifice, and the Cretans, for whom he had done so much in their hour of danger, upheld his cause in the hour of freedom’ (Hogarth 1910: 64; cf. MacGillivray 2001: 164). At least in this instance, another Greek ‘trait’ that many were quick to disavow, that of not upholding the letter of the law, did not come in for scorn – no doubt because it ‘upheld’ a worthy cause.

As for the Cretan gentlemen themselves, they had no qualms in publicly – and candidly – articulating the essence of the ‘cause’. In a long essay published in the Athenian journal Athená (see Hamilakis, Chapter 9), Xanthoudides wasted no time in drawing his readers’ attention to the ‘bloodstained Crete’ that, following its liberation as a result of the sacrifices of its people and the magnanimity of the ‘European Federation’, had already ‘compensated’ the latter by bringing to light ‘unique ancient relics’ on which ‘Greek and European civilization grew and attained manhood’ (1904: 297). For his part Chatzidakes (1900: 529) had earlier opined, with unqualified certainty, that ‘the attention of researchers on the ancient world, of archaeologists and historians, is today drawn mainly to the exploration of the beginnings and the roots of the Greek nation and of Greek civilization. Crete, according to [legend], was a great hearth of civilization and a political force to be reckoned with in those dark ages’.

Either way, the niche that both ‘gentlemen’ were seeking to carve for – and on behalf of – their beloved island is unmistakable. As is well known, such ‘views’ were espoused by many of their contemporary and later compatriots. Consider, for example, the leader of a prominent Athenian daily that the Knossos dig, in addition to verifying the ‘beginnings of Greek civilization’, had revealed the existence of a ‘civilization that had attained unprecedented and unexpected heights’ (Ebroï, 13/26 February 1903). Crucially, perhaps, these views were also in line with those of Evans and Hogarth who, in a letter to The Times argued that ‘we have here the first stepping-stone of European civilization’ (12 June 1899:}
13), while in October 1900, marvelling at the sight of ‘a beautiful life-size (fresco) painting of a youth, with an European and almost classically Greek profile’, that had been uncovered at Knossos, they again publicly reiterated that the dig ‘lies about the fountain-head of our own civilization’ – adding, undoubtedly with possible sponsors in mind, that ‘in this field at least, British archaeological enterprise has been fortunate enough to obtain a strong lead, and it rests with the public to see that it is maintained’ (The Times, 31 October 1900: 10, emphasis added).

Undoubtedly, the particular historical juncture that brought about the hybrid Cretan State and Prince George’s ‘unfortunate regime’ was instrumental in turning the island into an archaeological El Dorado, with the British at the helm. But the political contingency aside, ‘personal factors’, I have argued, were of equal importance. In particular, the rapport that Chatzidakes (and Xanthoudides) had established with Evans facilitated the convergence of national (Cretan) archaeology as a means of incorporating the island into European modernity (cf. Introduction and other chapters in this volume; Papadopoulos 2005) with colonial archaeology (cf. Hamilakis, Chapter 9), which in turn has left its weighty imprint on the appropriation of the ‘Minoan’ past – though perhaps less so on its production. In this particular instance at least, the mutual understanding and appreciation of each other served both sets of ‘gentlemen’ quite well – the (excessive?) ‘patriotic jealousy’ of both notwithstanding.

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